



The Massachusetts Commission on LGBT Youth

Commissioner Face Book Directory

2014



## **Officers**

Julian Cyr, Chair  
Julian Dormitzer, Vice Chair  
Gypsy Vidal, Vice Chair

## **Members**

Coco Alinsug  
Michel Anteby  
Ron Ardizzzone  
Miranda Balkin  
Claire Berman  
Roger Bourgeois  
Carly Burton  
Sean Cahill  
Julian Cyr  
Kristen Davies  
Athena Edmonds  
Katy Erker  
Chet Franczyk  
Raffi Freedman-Gurspan  
Kirsten Freni  
Pam Garramone  
Thomas Hyde  
Nicolas John  
Rachel Kahn  
Zach Kerr  
Stewart Landers  
Arthur Lipkin  
Diana Marcus  
Hillary Montague-Asp  
André Morgan

## **Consultants and Staff**

Pam Chamberlain  
Hannah Hussey  
Jeff Perrotti  
Anna Siembor

Alexander Nally  
Brett Nava-Coulter  
Robyn Ochs  
George Ramirez  
Susan Rees  
Jonathan Reveil  
Erika Rickard  
Cathy Samples  
Erica Scott Pacheco  
Brandon Sides  
Leandra Smollin  
Grace Sterling Stowell  
David Sullivan  
Colby Swettberg  
Nick Teich  
Vilma Uribe  
Phil Veysey  
Lawrence Vinson  
James Warren  
Ashley Waterberg  
Jason Wheeler  
Dominique Wilkins  
Alexis Yioulos  
Alex Zafris

**Julian Cyr**

Commission Chair



Julian Cyr has broad experience in public policy, health advocacy, and politics. He has served on the Commission since January 2011 and was elected Chair in December 2012. Julian is currently Director of Policy and Regulatory Affairs for Environmental Health at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Prior to this post, he was Deputy Director for Government Affairs at the Department. He organized on Governor Patrick and President Obama's successful re-election campaigns, and worked as a Harm-Reduction Counselor at the AIDS Support Group of Cape Cod. Previously, Julian interned at the White House, contributing to green jobs policy and energy efficiency at the Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President. He has also worked for the William J. Clinton Foundation's Clinton Global Initiative. Julian studied public policy and

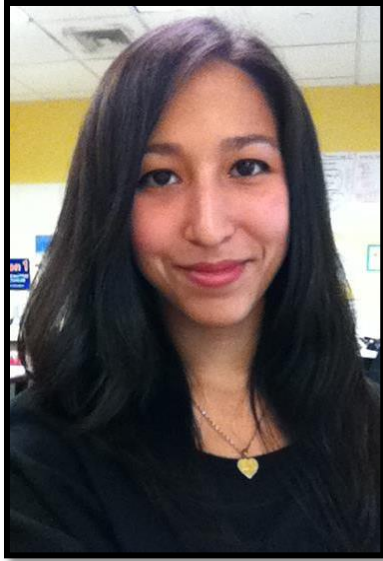
community health at New York University, where he also led undergraduate student government. He is a native of Truro, Massachusetts.

**Julian Dormitzer, R.N., B.S.N.**

Commission Vice Chair

Julian joined the Fenway Institute at Fenway Health and now works there as a clinical research nurse on the Adolescent Trials Network Team. She serves as a member of the Young Leadership Council of Fenway Health and tutors youth at the Hyde Square Task Force. Julian graduated from Grand Valley State University in May of 2011 with a Bachelor's degree in nursing, where she wrote a senior thesis on HIV incidence among young men who have sex with men (MSM). Originally from Traverse City, Michigan, Julian resides in Jamaica Plain.





### **Gypsy Vidal**

Commission Vice Chair

Gypsy is a Litigation & Research Assistant at Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders (GLAD). She holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations from Brown University, where she worked for the Brown Department of Health Education and was an active member of the Sexual Health Education & Empowerment Council. Gypsy is also a staff writer at the Center for Sexual Pleasure and Health, a sexual health education and advocacy non-profit organization in Rhode Island. She hopes to attend graduate school to study public health and public policy. A lifelong activist and believer in social change, Gypsy is excited for the opportunity to work with the Commission to address the

needs of Massachusetts's LGBT youth.

### **Coco Alinsug**

Safe Communities Committee

Coco devotes himself to social justice, HIV/AIDS prevention, and LGBT youth issues and receives recognition both nationally and internationally for his relentless work. He has served as Executive Director of the North Shore Alliance of GLBT Youth (NAGLY) for nine years and the Outreach and Insurance Manager of Fenway Health. He consults various HIV and STD Outreach Programs located in the North Shore and Boston. Coco and his team travel around New England, educating people about HIV and STD transmission. He also attends international conferences around the world as a polyglot fluent in nine languages. Originally from the Philippines, Coco resides in Lynn with his partner Peter and dog Albany.



**Michel Anteby, M.P.A., Ph.D.**

Safe Schools Committee, Co-Chair

Michel serves as an Associate Professor in the Organizational Behavior unit at Harvard Business School. He has taught in the School's M.B.A., doctoral, and executive programs. His research examines organizational and occupational cultures. Michel studies the building of meaning at work and the sustaining or moral order, documenting the processes by which individuals and organizations sustain their chosen identities. He holds a joint Ph.D. in sociology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris and in management from New York University. Michel grew up in France and previously volunteered as a mediator at the LGBT Community Center in New York.



**Ron Ardizzone**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

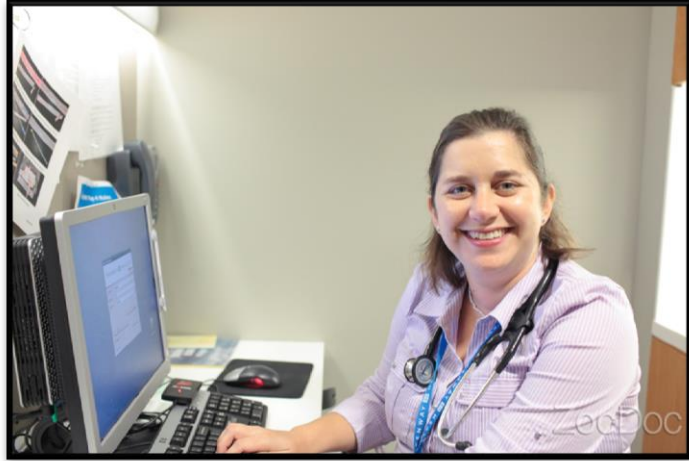
Ron works as an administrator at Bentley University and is currently the director of student systems. For the last 10 years he has been staff adviser to PRIDE (People Respecting Individuality and Diversity through Education), a student organization that provides support and social activities for Bentley's LGBTQ and Ally community. He serves on the university Diversity Council and co-chairs the faculty and staff LGBTQ@Bentley Steering Committee. The work involves collaborating with colleagues to promote campus educational and awareness programs, including the Day of Silence, Student Ally training, Rainbow Luncheon, and LGBTQ affinity networking events for alumni. In spring 2013, Ron was appointed to the board of directors of Greater Boston PFLAG (GBPFLAG). He is a member of the group's executive committee and chairs the communications and technology committee. He holds a BA in International Culture and Economy and an MBA, both from Bentley University.



## **Miranda Balkin**

Recommendations & Agency  
Relations Committee

Miranda Balkin is a family physician in practice at Fenway Community Health Center. She is a graduate of Oberlin College, Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and the Tufts University Family Medicine Residency. She is a former board chair of Medical Students for Choice and has extensive volunteer experience in the LGBTQ community. She hails from New York City and western Massachusetts and currently lives in Cambridge.



## **Claire Berman, M.S.**

Research & Innovation Committee, Co-Chair

Claire enjoys thinking creatively and sensitively to reach diverse audiences with health information. She specializes in health literacy, health narratives, and digital health communication. She has several years of experience working on issues of homelessness, health, and psychosocial support for LGBT youth. Claire serves as Director of Health Education and Communication for the Pediatric HIV/AIDS Cohort Study at the Harvard School of Public Health. Claire believes strongly in the power of dialogue and narrative to create change, as evidenced by her founding Inside Out Stories, a multimodal storytelling initiative that collects and shares stories of “being on the outside.”





**Roger Bourgeois**

## Safe Schools Committee



Roger spearheads efforts in schools to create supportive environments for LGBT students and speaks to school communities as a parent of a gay son. He is Assistant Superintendent for the Technical/Vocational Network at Boston Public Schools. He has over 30 years of experience in vocational, technical, and agricultural schools as a teacher and an administrator. He serves as Co-Chair of the Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Advisory Council to the Board of Education and is the immediate past-president of the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA). Roger and his wife Robin live in Middleton.

**Carly Burton, M.S.W.**

## Recommendations &amp; Agency Relations Committee

Carly has a variety of professional experiences in the world of nonprofit public policy advocacy. She previously served as Director of Strategic Development at the Providers' Council, a statewide association of non-profit, community-based care giving organizations in Massachusetts. She was the Deputy Director for the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), focusing on improving immigrant access to public programs. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Haymarket People's Fund and volunteers with the Grief Support Services network at Samaritans, Inc. Carly earned her Master's degree in social work at Boston University. Carly resides in Jamaica Plain with her partner Mo.





**Sean Cahill, Ph.D.**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

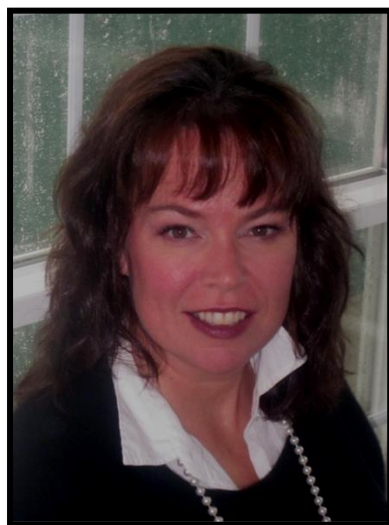
Sean is Director of Health Policy Research at the Fenway Institute in Boston, and also teaches public policy at the Wagner School of Public Service at New York University. At Fenway, Cahill is Co-Investigator on a community-based participatory research project addressing health disparities among LGBT youth of color in the Boston area, funded by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities. He wrote two books on LGBT family policy and coauthored *LGBT Youth in America's Schools* (2012: University of Michigan Press), as well as more than

two dozen peer reviewed journal articles and book chapters on LGBT and HIV policy issues. Previously Cahill held leadership positions at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and Gay Men's Health Crisis. Sean chaired the Lesbian and Gay Political Alliance of Massachusetts in the 1990s.

**Kristen Davies, L.M.H.C.**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Kristen Davies serves as Director of the In Home Therapy program at Child & Family Services-Hyannis. She comes to the Commission by way of the Massachusetts Society of Suicide Prevention. Kristen's clinical expertise includes working with LGBT youth and families. The *Lesbian Study Journal* published her research in the area of woman coming out later in life. Now a Ph.D. candidate, Kristen is working on her dissertation.





**Athena Edmonds**

Legislative Affairs Committee, Chair

Athena's poetry has appeared in literary journals such as *The Massachusetts Review*, *Connotation Press*, and *The Sugar House Review*. She has been awarded writing residencies at Ragdale, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, and Hedgebrook. In the '90s, she founded and managed a series of early stage software venture funds. She holds degrees in Materials Science from MIT and Cambridge University and in Management from the MIT Sloan School.

**Katy Erker**

Katy has experience working in areas of homelessness, empowerment, and community organizing. Having worked at Rosie's Place since 2010, Katy is excited to join the Commission and bring a perspective that has witnessed the struggles of adults who, decades ago, would have benefited from the work of this Commission. Katy studied Sociology and Women's and Gender Studies at Santa Clara University, and continued her education through studies at BU's

Institute on Non-Profit Management and Leadership. She currently lives in Jamaica Plain with her partner.



**Chet Franczyk, M.D.**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) appointed Chet to the Commission. He began to involve himself in LGBT issues as a parent of a gay son. His wife runs “Always Our Children,” a Catholic ministry for families and friends of LGBT individuals in Springfield. Chet received his Medical degree from SUNY Buffalo and now resides in West Springfield as a practicing pediatrician.

**Raffi Freedman-Gurspan**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

Raffi has worked for close to three years now as the Legislative Director for State Representative Carl Sciortino of Medford and Somerville. Prior to working for Carl, Raffi was the LGBT Liaison for the City of Somerville; the Legislative and Policy Staffer for the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition; and on a part-time basis for Boston University’s Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies Program as a Course and Research Assistant.

Raffi is a graduate of St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota, and holds a B.A. in Political Science and Norwegian with a Concentration in Nordic Studies. She has also studied International Human Rights Law and Gender Equality Studies at the Faculty of Law at the University of Oslo, Norway.



Raffi was adopted from Intibuca, Honduras and proudly hails from the Lenca people, the indigenous nation in that part of Central America. She grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts and graduated from Brookline High School in 2005. Raffi is the first openly transgender woman to work in the Massachusetts State House. She focuses her work on public policy issues concerning poverty, gender equity, and minority rights. She hopes to continue her education someday by attending a program for a Master’s in Public Administration.



**Kirsten Freni**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

Kirsten serves as the president of the North Shore Alliance of Gay & Lesbian Youth (NAGLY) and works as an HIV counselor, tester, and safe sex educator at Prism LGBT Health in Beverly. She regularly interacts with LGBT youth through her work. Kirsten further addresses LGBT youth issues as a member of the Mayor's Task Force in Lawrence, where she heads a group of predominately Latino/a LGBT youth and allies. She studied travel management at Newbury College and has since furthered her education through taking several trainings and certificate programs. Kirsten resides in Winthrop.

**Pam Garramone, M.Ed.**

Safe Communities Committee

Pam has taught elementary school and presented her personal development workshops. As the Executive Director of Greater Boston Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG), she regularly conducts educational programs in middle and high schools statewide. She also educates community, corporate, and religious organizations on LGBT issues. Pam frequently accepts awards for her work from organizations such as National PFLAG, the Human Rights Campaign, and the Greater Boston Business Council.





**Thomas Hyde, J.D.**

Legislative Affairs Committee

Thomas enjoys connecting the Commission to his network of LGBT advocates and business contacts. He brings human resources, legal, communication, and business experience to the Commission. He currently serves on the Board of Visitors at Fenway Health. Thomas served on the Board of Directors for the children's literacy organization Everybody Wins! and has also volunteered for numerous political campaigns. He received his Bachelor's degree in political science from Quinnipiac University and J.D. at Suffolk University Law School. Thomas resides in Boston.

**Nicolas John**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

Nicolas serves as Legislative Aide to the Vice-Chair of the Joint Committee on Election Laws and assists with the daily functioning of the Commission. He also served as the Committee Clerk for the Massachusetts House Committee on Public Service. He holds a Bachelor's degree in political science from Northeastern University. Nicolas resides in Boston.





**Rachel Kahn, M.A.**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Rachel is a mental health clinician and expressive therapist who works with adolescents in residential treatment and intensive day stabilization services. She has piloted innovative therapeutic programming integrating social justice, diversity issues, and expressive arts into the treatment milieu. Rachel currently works as a Day and Residential Clinician at Wayside Youth and Family Support Network's Framingham campus, where she facilitates a gay-straight alliance (GSA). Rachel is also a freelance

writer and performer. She performs as part of The Femme Show, a Boston-based collective performance troupe creating work about queer femininity and femme identity. Rachel has performed and facilitated workshops all over the east coast. She has served as the volunteer coordinator for the 2009 International Expressive Arts Therapies Association (IEATA) conference and as a steering committee member/the volunteer chair for the 2012 Femme Conference. She holds a Master's degree in expressive therapies and mental health counseling from Lesley University, and a Bachelor's degree in English from Mount Holyoke College. Rachel resides in Jamaica Plain.

**Zach Kerr**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Zach is a student at Wheelock College and has been an active leader of the school's gay-straight alliance (GSA). He has had an outstanding career as an actor in his school productions.







**Stewart Landers, J.D., M.C.P.**

Safe Communities Committee

Stewart consults at John Snow, Inc. on issues related to HIV & AIDS, substance abuse treatment, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) health, health care reform, chronic disease, and wellness. He has led research projects with several federal organizations such as the federal Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the HIV/AIDS Bureau. From 2007 until 2009, Stewart served as Senior Program Director at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. In addition

to his consulting duties, Stewart serves as an Associate Editor of the American Journal of Public Health and has authored or co-authored many articles on LGBT health. He teaches Evaluation of Health Services at the Tufts University Graduate Program in Public Health. Stewart received his B.S. and Master's degree in city planning from MIT in 1978 and his law degree from Harvard in 1982.

**Arthur Lipkin, Ed.D.**

Research & Innovation Committee

Arthur served as the Commission Chair from 2010 until 2012. He taught the first course on GLBT school issues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Arthur directed the Safe Colleges Program of the Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth; the state Project for the Integration of Gay & Lesbian Youth Issues in School Personnel Certification Programs; and Project 10 East at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. He authored *Beyond Diversity Day: A Q & A on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Schools* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) and *Understanding Homosexuality, Changing Schools* (Westview Press, 1999) and stood on the editorial board of the *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Youth*. Arthur also taught in the Cambridge Public Schools for 20 years.





**Diana Marcus, M.Ed.**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Diana is the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) representative on the Commission. She teaches elementary school in the Burlington Public Schools, where she previously taught special education. Diana obtained her Bachelor's degree in business administration and finance from Northeastern University and Master's of Education from Lesley University.



**Hillary Montague-Asp**

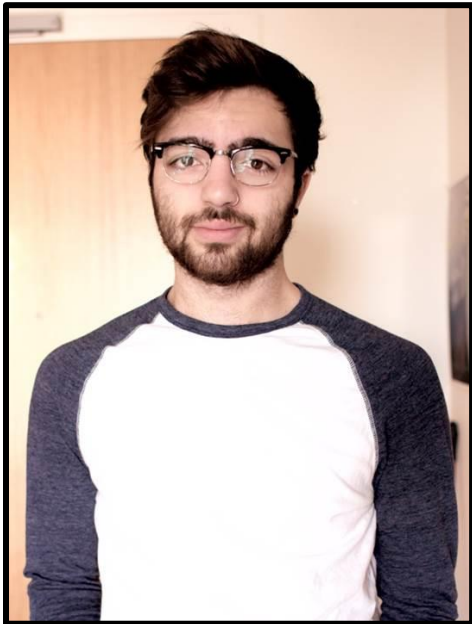
Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

Hillary is a Master's Student in Social Justice Education and Advanced Feminist Studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and was previously a student at the University of Colorado Boulder. She has published research on campus climate issues for transgender college students in Colorado, as well as extensively studied trends in media reporting of suicide amongst LGBTQ youth, specifically focusing on the It Gets Better Project. Hillary has focused her activism toward policy change for trans students, including but not limited to nondiscrimination policies, bathroom options, and housing, as well as educating her local communities on issues of misogyny and body positivity. She is interested in the construction of bullying in K-12 schools, particularly as it pertains to queer students and their intersecting identities. Her primary passions are: music, anything queer, everything femme, fat activism and body positivity, the outdoors and her wonderful cat, Nola!

## **Andy Morgan**

Research & Innovation Committee, Co-Chair

Andy serves as the Public Policy Assistant at Rosie's Place. He graduated from Wheaton College in 2010 with Bachelor's degrees in public policy and economic sociology. He hopes to contribute his experience involving policy, strategic planning, and developing partnerships to the Commission.



## **Alexander Armand Nally**

Legislative Affairs Committee

Alexander Armand Nally is currently an undergraduate student at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design where they are earning a BFA in Graphic Design. Alex grew up in Springfield, attended high school in Chicopee, and worked with LGBTQ youth through Generation Q/T.R.E.E. in Northampton where they focused on HIV/AIDS Risk Reduction and Suicide Prevention. Alex aspires to use their degree in Graphic Design to improve the quality of educational and campaign media for public health, HIV/AIDS prevention, and LGBTQ youth. After moving to Boston in 2012, they have since been an active member of the Fenway Health Youth Community Advisory Board and also serves on the Stigma Subcommittee of the Boston chapter of Connect 2 Protect. Additionally, they have presented on and trained student leaders in "LGBTQ 101" to improve the quality of campus climate for LGBTQ Students at MassArt and continue to improve other aspects of the college through their role as Student Trustee on the Executive Board of the Student Government Association and as a voting member of MassArt's Board of Trustees.



**Brett Nava-Coulter**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Brett studies as a Ph.D. student in sociology at Northeastern University. His schoolwork specializes in gender and sexuality, public health, and cultural competency for service providers. His experiences include a combination of research, policy, and political work. Brett received his Bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley and now works with undergraduates as an adjunct instructor at Tufts University and Northeastern University. Brett resides in Jamaica Plain.

**Robyn Ochs**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

Robyn speaks on bisexuality and other non-binary identities as an LGBT educator and activist. She is engaged with various community organizations, including MassEquality and the Bisexual Resource Center. She edits *Bi Women*, a quarterly publication. She has facilitated programs with the Boston Alliance of LGBT Youth (BAGLY), the North Shore Alliance of LGBT Youth (NAGLY), and other community based-youth and college groups. Robyn resides in Jamaica Plain.



**George Ramirez**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee

George Ramirez is a Bronx native with a rich history of activism and education based in Western Massachusetts. George is a Marketing professional and MPA candidate, working voluntarily for the Principality of Western Mass. He comes to the Commission with a focused goal of making issues related to LGBTQ Youth of color an active priority. As with most of his progressive work, George wants to make sure the lives of young people are impacted by his participation.

**Susan S. Rees**

Safe Schools Committee, Co-Chair

Susan has over thirty years of experience in the field of education. She currently serves as the Executive Director of Natick's ACCEPT Education Collaborative, which promotes excellence and innovation in educational practice. Susan served on the Executive Board for the Massachusetts Federation for the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), serving as their Child and Youth Advocacy Network representative in Washington, D.C. from 2006 until 2009. She currently serves on the Board of the Massachusetts Organization of Education Collaboratives (MOEC). Susan has six grown children and resides in Brookline with her husband.

**Jonathan Reveil**

Safe Communities Committee

**Erika Rickard, J.D.**

Recommendations & Agency Relations, Chair

Erika works as a Research Associate at Harvard Business School. She has expertise on juvenile justice, youth homelessness, and child welfare issues. She has worked to implement the Massachusetts Bullying Prevention Law. A current member and Vice Chair of the Commission, Erika previously co-chaired the Oversight Committee and spearheaded the FY2014 Recommendations. She holds her J.D. from Harvard Law School and her Bachelor's degree from Mills College. Originally from Tucson, AZ, Erika resides in Cambridge.



**Cathy Samples, M.D., M.P.H.**

Research & Innovation Committee

Cathy is a pediatrician, Adolescent sub specialist and HIV care provider (AAHIVS), who has been providing primary and consultative care to Boston youth for more than 30 years. In addition to providing primary care in the Adolescent/Young Adult practice at Children's Hospital, she is Director of the Boston HAPPENS Program. She has past experience running the school health program in New York City, and since 2009 serves as Regional Medical Director for Metro-Boston DYS Health Services, overseeing a team of nurse practitioners caring for youth in four residential juvenile justice programs. Cathy is an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard Medical School and served for many years as Chair of the Massachusetts Adolescent Health Council.

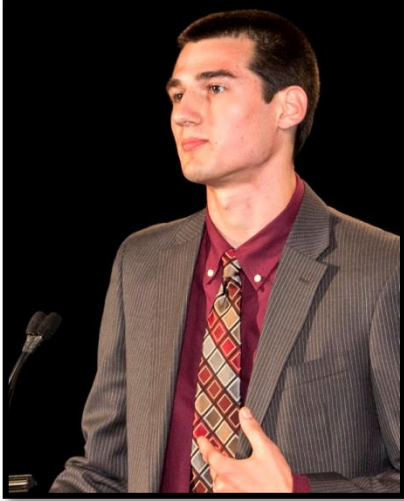


**Erica Scott Pacheco**

Safe Communities Committee

Erica has experience in the sexual assault, domestic violence, reproductive health, and advocacy fields. She brings experience as a nonprofit treasurer along with project management and technology skills. She holds her Master's from UNC at Chapel Hill and her Bachelor's from Harvard. Erica resides with her husband in Rehoboth, where she has strong ties to the Native and Latino communities. She served on the American Indian Women of Proud Nations conference committee and enjoys the beach and playing with her two cats.





### **Brandon Sides**

Legislative Affairs Committee

Brandon received the Elsie Frank Scholarship at the 2012 Pride and Passion Fundraiser from Greater Boston Parents & Friends of Lesbian & Gays (PFLAG). He recently joined the Commission as part of the Commission's attempts to expand its outreach to western Massachusetts and to include more youth Commissioners. He educates counselors, students, and staff in schools statewide for Greater Boston PFLAG. Brandon currently attends the University of Massachusetts Amherst as a first-year student.

### **Leandra Smollin**

Research & Innovation Committee

Leandra Smollin has been a Commissioner since 2011. She has served as co-chair of the Policy Recommendation Committee and as a member of the Executive Board. She is currently completing her doctorate in Sociology at Northeastern University. Leandra's research focuses on social inequalities involving gender, sexuality, race, and class, in addition to the sociology of health and violence. She focuses on dating violence in queer adolescent relationships. Leandra also teaches Sociology, Gender Studies, and Human Services courses at Northeastern and Boston University. Outside of the academic realm, Leandra has been involved in community-based work with the North Shore Alliance of Gay & Lesbian Youth (NAGLY) since 2009.







### **Grace Sterling Stowell**

Safe Communities Committee, Chair

Grace has been a pioneering activist and leader in the social justice and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) youth communities for over 35 years. She is the founding executive director of the Boston Alliance of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Youth (BAGLY), one of the oldest and largest LGBT youth organizations in the nation. She is a founding member of several local and national LGBT youth advocacy organizations, and she currently serves as an Executive Committee member of the Massachusetts

Commission on LGBT Youth and Steering Committee member of the Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition (MTPC). Grace is also a nationally known advocate and leader on the issues facing transgender youth and young adults. Grace received a B.A. in English from Curry College in Milton, MA and a M.A. in Counseling Psychology from Lesley University in Cambridge, where she resides. While Grace has served many roles in her community work over the past three decades, she is particularly honored to be known as “Mother” (and now “Grandmother!”) by three generations of greater Boston’s LGBT youth.

### **David Sullivan**

Legislative Affairs Committee

David is a soon to be graduate of Belmont High School with plans to attend a four year college in the fall. He is heavily involved with his school community and a former Congressional Immigration Intern. Currently David is caucusing for an up and coming Democratic gubernatorial candidate. He intends to be a Belmont delegate to the 2014 Massachusetts Democratic State Convention in the near future.



**Colby Swettberg, Ed.M., L.C.S.W.**

Safe Communities Committee

Colby's career began in education as a high school teacher. She went on to earn a Master's degree in Education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and later turned her focus to child welfare and social services after earning a Master's degree in Social Work from the Simmons School of Social Work. Colby worked for The Home for Little Wanderers for seven years, where she opened and oversaw the nation's first group home for LGBT teenagers; partook in clinical work in adoption and family stabilization team services; facilitated support groups for LGBT foster and adoptive families; and provided training and consultation nationwide on sexual orientation and gender identity issues. Colby now serves as Executive Director of Adoption & Foster Care Mentoring, a non-profit organization that mentors and teaches life skills to youth in the foster care system.



**Nick Teich, M.S.W.**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Nick is the founder and president of Camp Aranu'tiq, the world's first summer camp for transgender and gender-variant youth. His camp operates in two locations, one in New England and one in California. He authored *Transgender 101: A Simple Guide to a Complex Issue* (Columbia University Press, 2012). He also consults on gender diversity issues for schools and camps. Nick is a Ph.D. candidate at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University. He is currently researching the long-term impacts of anti-transgender bullying in high schools. He obtained his M.S.W. from Boston College and his Bachelor's

degree in communication from the University of Miami. Nicholas resides in Newton.

**Vilma Uribe**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Vilma serves as a family and community advocate at the Renewal House in Roxbury. She works there with survivors of domestic violence, facilitates workshops, coordinates community outreach, and educates youth on healthy relationships. Vilma also volunteers with Boston's Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC). She hopes to focus her efforts on the Commission towards LGBT youth homelessness. Vilma graduated from Oberlin College in 2011, where she received degrees in gender, sexuality, and feminist studies and in comparative American studies. Vilma resides in Dorchester.

**Phil Veysey**

Safe Schools Committee

Phil is a retired science teacher of Dearborn Middle School in Boston. At the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Massachusetts, he co-chaired the Career in Teaching Panel and worked for the Lead Teacher and Mentor Teacher program. At AFT, he serves as Director of Education Policy.

**Lawrence Vinson**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

Lawrence originally hails from Georgia where he attended Morehouse College and has spent the last few years working as a Case Manager at Boston Medical Center and Codman Square Health Center here in Boston. In these roles, Lawrence provided case management services to HIV infected clients who were in-care, falling-out-of-care and not-in-care, worked with ID Clinic, STD Clinic, and inpatient HIV testers doing HIV/STD counseling for positive

patients, interfaced with medical and mental health providers, community agencies and financial and health insurance agencies, and developed and co-facilitated a weekly support group for young Black HIV+ men who have sex with men (MSM) from Dorchester and surrounding communities. Lawrence is currently pursuing a nursing degree with the hopes of eventually becoming an MD or NP and brings a tremendous amount of enthusiasm about working with HIV infected/affected young people in the Boston community and creating structural change.

**James Warren**

Recommendations & Agency Relations Committee

James lives in Ludlow and currently works as District Director for Senator Gale Candaras. In addition to a clear understanding of how to navigate legislative and agency schedules and agendas, James brings a passion for LGBTQ mental health issues and experience with press and public outreach.



**Ashley Waterberg, M.S.W.**

Safe Schools Committee

Ashley works as a school social worker in an elementary and middle school with Revere Public Schools. She serves as one of three representatives of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) on the Commission, and she also serves as a co-chair of the LGBT Special Interest Group through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Massachusetts Chapter. During her spare time, she enjoys hiking, biking, dancing, snowshoeing, road trips and exploring new places. Ashley received her Master's degree in social work at Washington University in St. Louis and her undergraduate degree in human development and family studies at the University of Vermont.



**Jason Wheeler**

Community Partnership Committee

Jason Wheeler has been professionally committed to youth development and leadership for the past 17 years, beginning with his extensive involvement in National Service programs that focused on issues related to education, disability inclusion, and social justice. Jason now provides national training and technical assistance on a variety of topics ranging from youth engagement to strategic planning and organizational development. He has worked extensively with LGBTQ youth, veterans, and disabled people. He is a graduate trainee of the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Program at Children's Hospital Boston, a graduate-level interdisciplinary training for health professionals. Jason serves as a Board Member and the Conference Chair for the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) of Massachusetts. Jason lives in Everett, MA.





### **Dominique Wilkins**

Legislative Affairs Committee

Dominique completed her undergraduate and graduate work at Clark University in Worcester, focusing on City Planning and Youth and Community Development. Upon finishing, Dominique served for 2 years as an Americorps member for a play-based youth development non-profit, and stayed for another 2 years after her service ended. She is currently a Boston public school teacher at an elementary school in Dorchester. Dominique also volunteers with the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition (HBGC) and is a passionate about vocalizing the presence and concerns of people of color in queer communities.

Originally from suburbs of Washington DC, Dominique now resides in Roslindale.

### **Alexis Yioulos**

Legislative Affairs Committee

Alexis previously acted as Advisor to the Commission and now serves as Vice Chair. She graduated from Danvers High School, where, through her involvement with Rotary International, she spearheaded a project to assist homeless women and children on the North Shore. She also co-founded Students United for Acceptance, a student-led organization dedicated to conducting transgenerational, community-wide outreach for acceptance. Both the Danvers Committee for Diversity and the North Shore Alliance of GLBT Youth honored her organization's efforts. Alexis attends Babson College.





**Alex Zafris**

Public Affairs & Outreach Committee, Chair

Alex currently works in the Office of Governor Deval Patrick as scheduler and briefing coordinator and previously served as assistant director of the Governor's personnel office. He graduated in 2012 from the University of Massachusetts Boston with a Bachelor's degree in political science. Alex lives in Boston.

**Hannah Hussey**

Commission Coordinator



Hannah has been working as Commission Coordinator since August 2012, after previously interning with MassEquality and the Boston Consortium on Gender, Security, and Human Rights. She received her B.A. in Sociology and in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from Tufts University, where she was an active member of Students Acting for Gender Equality. While at Tufts, she completed a capstone project examining the contributions of feminist and queer theory to asexuality studies, and now serves on the board of Asexual Awareness Week. Hannah has experience working for a consulting agency specializing in nonprofits and spent several years as a freelance reporter for the York County Coast Star. Originally

from Maine, Hannah currently lives in Somerville.

**Jeff Perrotti**

Director of the Safe Schools Program

Jeff Perrotti is the founding director of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Safe Schools Program for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students. He is the co-author of *When the Drama Club is not Enough* (Beacon Press, 2002). Jeff is a graduate of Northwestern University, University of California at Santa Barbara, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He has conducted numerous workshops on sexual orientation, gender, anti-bullying, resilience, and suicide and violence prevention for school administrators, counselors, nurses, coaches, teachers, parents, and students. For the past six years, Jeff has worked closely with vocational technical schools to support students who are interested in careers that are nontraditional for their gender. Jeff teaches and advises students at Harvard University, where he has received several awards for excellence in teaching. Jeff is a consultant for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Commission.

**Anna Siembor**

Safe Schools Fellow – Massachusetts Promise Fellow



Anna is a recent graduate of Northeastern University, where she received a BA in English and Linguistics with a minor in Women's, Gender and Sexuality studies. Her academic work focused on how multilingualism and gender identity affect linguistic communication in social work. She is passionate about her local Boston community and she is a board member at Fenway News. For the past four years, she has been affiliated with Girls' LEAP Self-Defense, first as a volunteer and now as a lead teacher. Previously, she held positions at Rosie's Place and the Northeastern University Writing Center. She is passionate about LGBTQ issues and she is very excited to join the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth as their Safe Schools Fellow, working to expand and strengthen the GSA Network.